



Outreach programme hosted at SAAO wins prestigious international award

The Universe Awareness (UNAWA) programme, with which the SA Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) is intimately involved, has been honoured with the Science Prize for Online Resources in Education (SPORE) award. Science Magazine introduced the SPORE award as a means to showcase the best educational resources that are available on the Internet and to bring them to a wider audience.

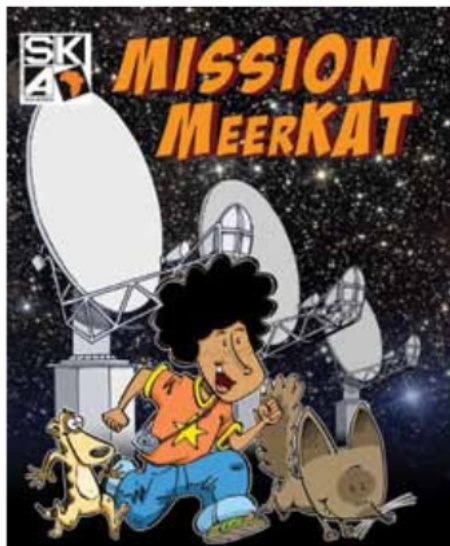
The prize goes to Dr. Carolina Ödman-Govender, a core developer of the UNAWA programme. She has worked in science for development for many years in the Netherlands, before joining the SAAO and the African Institute for Mathematical Science (AIMS) in 2010. She now holds the position of director of academic development of the AIMS – Next Einstein Initiative (AIMS – NEI). “One of the key features of UNAWA is its openness; it is a form of crowd-sourced education. A vast network of educators contribute educational materials and

resources, which are uploaded to the UNAWA website. They can then be distributed, adapted and translated for use in other countries”, she says.

UNAWA is an international programme that uses the beauty and grandeur of the Universe to inspire children aged 4–10 years, particularly those from an underprivileged background. The programme uses astronomy to cultivate a sense of perspective, foster a global citizenship and stimulate interest in science at a crucial age in a child’s development. The UNAWA website hosts a vast repository of educational materials that are produced by the programme’s network of almost 500 educators and astronomers in 40 countries – one of the biggest international networks of science educators. UNAWA is a programme endorsed by the International Astronomical Union (IAU). Visit UNAWA at www.unawe.org.

“The web site is intended to give a sense of perspective to everyone who uses it,” says Dr Ödman-Govender. “You can see the universe as a big place and a beautiful place in which you fit.”

Mission MeerKAT – the adventure continues



In the third edition of SKA South Africa’s popular comic series, Hannah, the intrepid school reporter from Carnarvon, explores the involvement of our African partners in the SKA project. Download Mission Meerkat 1, 2 and 3 at <http://www.ska.ac.za/education/mkcartoon.php>

SKA SA bursar wins top UCT research award

SKA South Africa MSc bursary holder James Newling has been awarded a University of Cape Town (UCT) Research Associateship for 2011 for his thesis, entitled “Novel Methods of Supernova Classification and Type Probability Estimation”. His work builds on the previous research of his thesis supervisor and collaborators, towards a better understanding of dark energy through observing supernovae. There were only 5 such awards made in the whole Science Faculty, and James’ is one of only two at the MSc level.

His thesis supervisor Prof Bruce Bassett said the following about his talented student: “James did fantastic work for his MSc, leading a team that came second overall in the international supernova typing challenge. His research, which produced two first author papers, would be enough for a PhD in many places. We wish him the best with his future studies and expect big things!”



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